



CERS Business User Group

Newsletter for September 2012

Mission Statement:

The California Environmental Reporting System Business User Group (C-BUG) has been established to evaluate and provide feedback to Cal/EPA on the CERS' statewide web-based system used to electronically collect and report various hazardous material-related data as mandated by the California Health and Safety Code, and AB 2286. The CERS Business User Group will be comprised of the web-based system regulated end users and their representatives. This group will meet routinely, e.g. monthly, until a general consensus is reached that the web-based system no longer needs changes to address significant end users' needs. The meeting frequency will be adjusted to meet the group's needs. Cal/EPA, the CUPAs, and others will participate as deemed appropriate by the group.

CERS2 Implementation Updates and Information of General Interest

CERS-BUG the clock is ticking down to January 1, 2013, the date AB2286 requires all regulated businesses and Unified Program Agencies (UPA/PA) in the State of California to use the internet to file Unified Program information now filed by paper forms. The C-BUG was kicked off in 2010 to provide businesses a method to evaluate and provide feedback to Cal/EPA on the CERS statewide web-based system. This newsletter addresses the most common questions and responses that are being funneled through C-BUG.

How are we doing? While multi-jurisdiction businesses (corporations, public works, utility companies, and consultants) represent the predominant number of participants in the CERS-BUG we expect small businesses to benefit from our work. We have influenced system enhancement, such as a forthcoming dropdown menu to select previously entered chemical locations and provided critical testing and troubleshooting activities.

CERS is built on a set of regulatory definitions that are translated to create framework and data structure. Together the C-BUG is collaborating on a draft CERS User Guide. The guide is an evolving document and your participation is sought. We are currently working on an advanced section for validating inventory. The user guide is a product of business user lessons learned to assist system users with the navigation of CERS and does its best to chaperon system users through the system interface. It also helps businesses and regulators interpret requirements by citing regulated definitions.

There has been some confusion regarding the January 1, 2013 cutoff date. Businesses do not have to file on or before that date. After the cutoff date all **new submissions** must be electronically submitted through CERS or a local portal. Businesses with facilities in multiple UPA/PA jurisdictions can choose to use CERS or choose to use the local agency portal if the jurisdiction offers a local portal. The bottom line is: the business retains the right to decide to use a local portal where offered or CERS.

Regulator Local Requirements: <https://cersbusiness.calepa.ca.gov/Reports/RegulatorLocalRequirements>
Training Link: <http://cers.calepa.ca.gov/business/training>

CUPA/PAs are transitioning to electronic reporting and the system is being “seeded” from a number of CUPA/PA databases.

- 41 CUPA/PAs are now allowing electronic reporting.
- 5 agencies, Bakersfield Fire, Inyo County, Petaluma Fire, Torrance Fire, and Lassen County, have completed the transition to electronic reporting.
- 20 CUPAs are developing integrated local portals for businesses to use as an optional alternative to CERS.



Reconciling seeded data and new entries. A CERS Data seeding schedule/queue is now available on the data seeding

page accessible from CERS Central (<http://cers.calepa.ca.gov/DataSeeding>). The purpose of seeding CERS is to save businesses the labor of reentering previously submitted information on existing facilities; however, there may be some consequences. In the data seeding process draft data entered into CERS that has not been “Submitted” to regulator(s) could be overwritten and in some instances facilities may be duplicated. Solutions to address this include:

- A report is being added to CERS (under “Tools”) listing draft submittals overwritten during Data Seeding.
- Businesses can restore overwritten drafts using “Discard Draft Submittal” button on draft submittal page.
- See “Manage Facilities” in the user guide for searching, merge, delete and archive facilities tips.
- Contact your local CUPA/PA. <https://cersbusiness.calepa.ca.gov/Tools/Regulators>

Lessons Learned: Before you get started with electronic reporting, decide what your organization is going to look like, who is going to access the data, make entries, and who has the authority to make submittals for the business. Know what is being seeded by the local CUPA/PA, how you are going to manage your business organization, facilities, people, and report inventories and associated documents. Refer to the user guide for a better understanding of how to manage people, business organizations, unified program facilities, chemical location (field 201) and statewide definitions:

- A **unified program facility (UPF)** means all contiguous land and structures, other appurtenances, and improvements on the land that are subject to the requirements of the unified program.
- A **business organization** is a non-legal term coined specifically for CERS. It allows a business to manage a group of facilities that are associated with that business and to manage users who are authorized to access or report information for those facilities.
- **People** are system users associated with one or more business organizations. A consultant, normally an editor, may be assigned user privileges to multiple business organizations. A business owner/operator is responsible for ensuring that the business organization has a **lead user** (recommend two or more) to view/edit/submit facility information plus manage the organization’s users.
- A **Chemical Location (inventory field 201)** is a building or outside/adjacent area where hazardous material is handled. A chemical that is stored at the same pressure and temperature, in multiple locations within a building, may be reported on a single page.

Tod Ferguson

C-BUG Host

tferguson@ucsd.edu